

**PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ON A 15 HA  
PORTION OF THE ALLOTMENT AREA THAT BORDERS ON THE  
SKERPDRAAI AND DIEPKLOOF TROWNSHIPS AT OLIFANTSHOEK,  
GAMAGARA MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

**Peter B Beaumont**

c/o Archaeology Department  
McGregor Museum  
PO Box 316  
8300 Kimberley  
Tel 053 - 842 0986 or 053 - 839 2700  
Fax 053 - 842 1433  
e-mail [se@museumsnc.co.za](mailto:se@museumsnc.co.za)

**CONSULTANT**

**Ms Marquerite Geldenhuys**

**MEG Environmental Impact Studies**

Tweedelaan 13  
Oosterville  
8801 Upington  
Tel 054 - 332 2781  
Fax 054 - 332 2781  
e-mail [megois@intekom.co.za](mailto:megois@intekom.co.za)

24 May 2007

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to establish if any heritage sites were present on a 15 ha portion of the Olifantshoek Allotment Area, some 1 km east of Olifantshoek in the Gamagara District of the Northern Cape. About 2 hour – long foot survey of this Hutton Sand covered hillside produced 9 – 10 stone artefacts and 4 graves of unknown age, but nowhere did I see any archaeological sites or palaeontological bones. It is consequently considered that this terrain, except for the interments, has no heritage potential, and that its use for an urgently needed housing development will have no impact on the heritage resources of the Northern Cape.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

From enquiries received during my visit it was clear that a great need for further housing exists in this vicinity, and that this is likely to grow as expanding iron ore mining some 40 km away results in quickening economic activity, regionally.

This study is part of an EIA being prepared by Marquerite Geldenhuys of MEG Environmental Impact Studies, acting in conjunction with Macroplan Town and Regional Planners, who are based in Upington.

## **REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Significant sites in the broad vicinity include a recently found Late Acheulean occurrence on the farm Fuller 578, some 6 km to the NW, the engraving site with contiguous LSA and Fauresmith at Nchwaneng, about 30 km to the NW, and conflict localities of the late 1800's to the north in the Langeberge (Shillington 1985).

## **PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

The 15 ha property that was inspected is part of the Olifantshoek Allotment Area and abutts on the Skerpdraai and Diepkloof settlements just east of Olifantshoek in the Gamagara Municipality of the Northern Cape (Figs 1 & 2). It comprises a Hutton Sand – coated quartzite hillside with a ca 7° slope northwestward that runs down to the poort in the Langeberge in which Olifantshoek is situated and through which the Olifantsloop drains to the NNE (Fig. 3). I spent two hours with M Geldenhuys walking over its full extent, with midpoint co-ordinates of about 27° 56' 48.4" S, 22° 44' 42.8" E, after 10:30 am on Thursday 17 May 2007.

## **SUPERFICIAL GEOLOGY**

Downslope, not far from the Olifantsloop, an area with deep dongas revealed uneven basal quartzite and a localized occurrence of beige shale of presumed Karoo age

that may support the contention of M de Wit of De Beers (pers. comm.) that Dwyka glaciation extended further north than is generally accepted.

Overlying those rocks there was a thin (10 – 15 cm) quartzite rubble with a low content of ESA? flakes, followed by up to 2m of Hutton Sand that is browner towards the surface, possibly because of a previously higher vegetation cover towards the poort base. The red sands thin out further upslope to under ca. 1 m in depth, and in that vicinity quartzite boulders that are often subrounded due to prolonged weathering outcrop here and there, particularly where the surface has been eroded along *ad hoc* roads and pathways.

## HERITAGE FINDINGS

My 2 hour – long search produced half a dozen quartzite flakes and cores of varying weathering state, a core and flake of black chert, both fresh, and a single fresh flake of jaspilite, from Kathu outcrops some 40 km away (Fig. 4). Most of the specimens were from or near bedrock in eroded areas, and are taken to reflect the sporadic use of hillside clasts in ESA times, prior to the accumulation of the Hutton Sands. Nowhere did I see any archaeological sites or palaeontological bones.

With the help of local residents, particularly Biel Thole, I tracked down four graves near the uppermost housing, at 1 287 m, with co-ordinates of 27° 56' 58.2" S, 22° 44' 42.3" E (Fig. 5). They are all together, in a row, two adults and two children, all oval in plan – form and covered by quartzite cobbles, but only the adult interments had natural unscribed headstones. Although there is no direct evidence as to age, they are at least a decade old, according to one informant, and indeed, it does seem unlikely that these burials are contemporaneous with the closeby township. A best guess would be that they represent a single family interred there previously, before ca. 1950.

## CONCLUSIONS

The graves must be fenced with 1.5 m wire mesh set in a rectangle at least 3 m from the nearest interment, with entry by way of a padlocked gate of the same height.

Their maintenance should be integrated with the existing schedule for the upkeep of other burial grounds that fall within the municipality. As for the rest of the terrain, this produced no significant heritage material, and its use for much – needed housing will therefore have no impact on the heritage resources of the Northern Cape.

## REFERENCES

Shillington, K. 1983. *The colonization of the Southern Tswana: 1820 – 1900*. Raven Press, Johannesburg.

## NOTES

- A copy of the locality maps and all appended Figures must accompany this report to SAHRA.
- Applications to SAHRA will not be processed unless accompanied by payment of R150 per application. SAHRA banking details are: ABSA, Branch Code: 312109; Current Account no.: 360 680 606.



2. Proposed boundary of a 3000 area

TR/ PFF450: 711

CONSTRUCTION AREA IN 1111 71

3-3

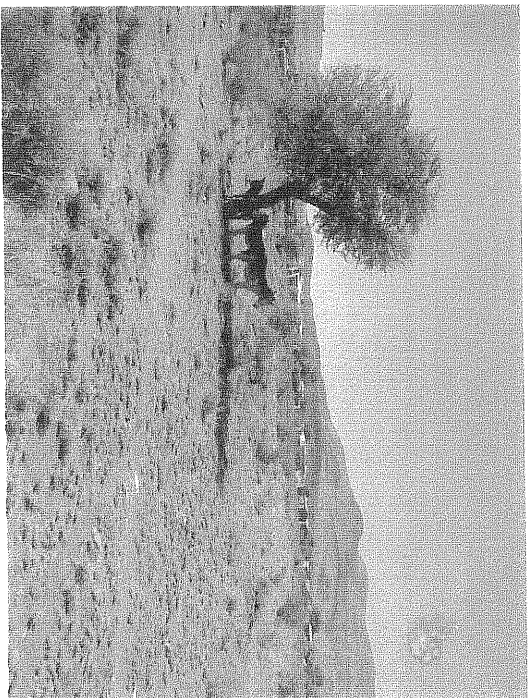


Fig 3. View of Heron's  
looking upslope

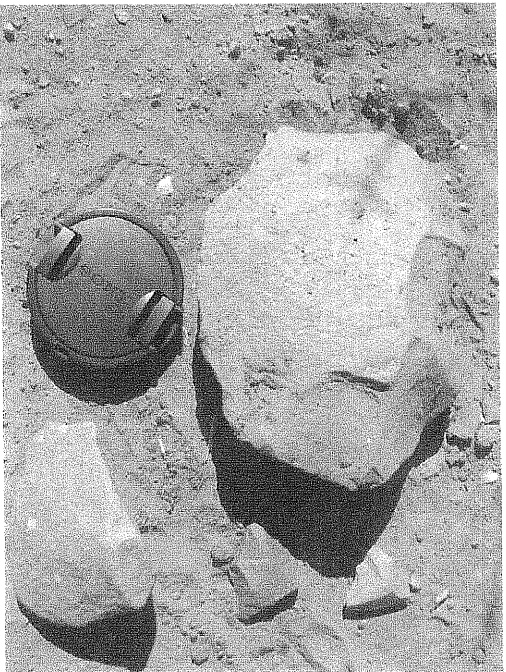


Fig 4. Four retrieved  
artifacts. The large light  
flake is upper right

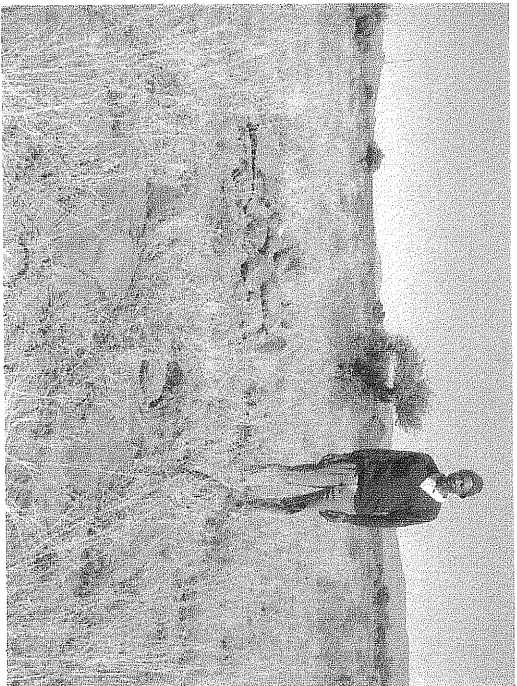


Fig 5. Briel Male standing  
next to grooves.